

## **Guidelines for Providing Appropriate and Timely Services to Limited English Proficient (LEP) Customers**

It is the State Personnel Board's Policy (SPB) to ensure that all persons accessing its services are provided services in an appropriate and timely manner. Delivery of services shall be accomplished in a manner that recognizes individual needs and is sensitive to cultural differences. To ensure LEP customers are provided equal access to SPB services, staff should refer to the following guidelines:

- If you encounter an in-person visitor who is requesting services and you feel that you are not effectively communicating with them in English:

Attempt to ascertain from the individual whether or not they would prefer communicating through an interpreter. You should do so by asking "Would you prefer to have an interpreter assist you in a language other than English?" You may also provide them with a copy of the "Notice of Interpreter Services", if you think that would assist them in understanding your question. If they respond "no" then continue to assist them in English. However, if they respond affirmatively, or you don't think they understood your question, then:

### **Do The Following:**

1. Attempt to communicate with the person in English to the extent necessary to assist them in accessing interpreter services.
2. Utilize the language identification card to identify the Non-English language the individual is proficient in speaking.
3. Look on the SPB list of Bilingual Employees and determine if an SPB staff member is capable of assisting the individual in the language identified by them. If so contact the SPB employee to request their assistance.
4. If there are no SPB staff available to serve as an interpreter then contact our telephone interpreter service contractor, NetworkOmni. Utilize the instruction card provided by NetworkOmni to access one of their staff.
5. If you feel that you are having difficulty in providing service to the individual, please contact your supervisor immediately for assistance.
6. If your supervisor is unavailable, contact the Bilingual Services Unit staff at 653-9017.

**Do Not:**

1. Raise your voice or yell at the person. Speaking loudly will not increase their ability to understand you.
  2. Use hand gestures or arm movements to communicate with the person. Many hand gestures or arm movements can be insulting to some cultures and is not an appropriate manner for increasing communication.
  3. Speak down to the person or make inappropriate comments or facial expressions that could be conceived as belittling the person due to their inability to communicate in English.
  4. Ask strangers, children or other non-certified interpreters to provide interpreter services. You may use these individuals to determine the Non-English language the person speaks and to communicate to them, that you are locating an interpreter to assist them.
  5. Ask them to come back later or to bring their own interpreter with them.
- If you are communicating with a customer, over the telephone, who is requesting services and feel that you are not effectively communicating with the individual in English:

Attempt to ascertain from the individual whether or not they would prefer an interpreter. You should do so by asking "Would you prefer to have an interpreter assist you in a language other than English?" If they respond "no", then continue your conversation in English. However, if they respond affirmatively or you don't think they understood your question, then:

**Do the Following:**

1. Attempt to communicate with the person in English to the extend necessary to assist them in accessing interpreter services.
2. Ask the person "What language would you like an interpreter to speak?"

If the caller identifies a language, ask the caller to please hold and place the caller on hold. Then:

- Look on the SPB list of Bilingual Employees and determine if an SPB staff member is capable of assisting the individual in the language identified by them. If so contact the SPB employee to request their assistance.

- If there are no SPB staff available to serve as an interpreter then contact our telephone interpreter service contractor, NetworkOmni. Utilize the instruction card provided by NetworkOmni to access one of their staff.

If you are not successful in obtaining the language information from the individual, ask the caller to please hold for a minute and place the caller on hold.

- Contact our telephone interpreter service contractor, NetworkOmni. Utilize the instruction card provided by NetworkOmni to access one of their staff. Their interpreter will identify the language skill required and provide an appropriate bilingual third-party interpreter.
3. If you are uncertain of how to handle the call, contact your supervisor immediately. If your supervisor is unavailable, contact the Bilingual Services Unit staff at 653-9017.

### **Do Not:**

- Raise your voice or yell at the person. Speaking loudly will not increase their ability to understand you.
- Speak down to the person or make inappropriate comments that could be conceived as belittling the person due to their inability to communicate in English.
- Ask strangers, children or other non-certified interpreters to provide interpreter services. You may use these individuals only to determine the Non-English language the person speaks and to communicate that you are locating an interpreter to assist them.
- Ask the person to call back later or to provide their own interpreter.